

6/16/76

ARGENTINE
REACTION

CONTROL 397
16 June 76
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE TELEGRAM

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Reaction file

FROM Amembassy BUENOS AIRES		CLASSIFICATION [REDACTED]
E.O. 11652:	GDS SHUM	UNCLASSIFIED DDOH
TAGS:	PINT, SOPNY, AR	
SUBJECT:	Government and the Media	
ACTION:	Secstate WASHDC USIA WASHDC	
REF	[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 3976	
	(a) Buenos Aires 369L, (b) Buenos Aires 1951	
	1. The June 10 issue of GENTE, the largest circulation (270,000) general interest magazine in Argentina, published an article containing a series of letters received by the government from abroad protesting specific human rights violations in Argentina and demanding the release of certain individuals believed held by the military govt. The letters were part of what Interior Minister Harguindeguy called "an international plot against Argentina" in a press conference June 2 (ref a), and, indeed, the article pointed out that the letters were so similar that they clearly represented a concerted letter writing campaign. Harguindeguy, however, had also claimed that he knew nothing about any of the individuals named in the letters; indeed, he said most had never been in Argentina. GENTE requested copies of the letters for a feature story on the "plot".	

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DRAFTED BY: USIS:MO'Brien:cc	DRAFTING DATE 6/15/76	TEL. EXT. 361	CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED BY: POL:WSSmith WBS
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CLEARANCES:
USIS:HWoodward (in draft) CHARGE:MChaplin

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE A/RPS/PS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

FORM 11-72
Exemption(s):
Declassify: () In Part (X) In Full
() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to
Date Declassify on Reason

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[The Minister agreed but when shown the galley proofs of the very favorable article, he had second thoughts and ordered that the letters not be published. GENTE explained that the edition had already gone to press and Harguindeguy responded that if ^{it} ~~they~~ were not withdrawn he would have the entire print run seized. When questioned closely by GENTE Managing Editor Samuel Gelblung (protect) as to the rationale for his attitude, Harguindeguy admitted sheepishly that he had lied at his press conference and in fact most of the individuals named in the letters were in government custody. Gelblung immediately requested some tape, covered the offending names, and the slightly-altered article appeared the following day.

2. This incident is illustrative of the government's rather naive and inept attempts to utilize the Argentine media since the coup. After a good start (ref b), the government-controlled media, which floundered in a sea of corruption under the Peronist administration, are now beset by a wave of military reforms that threaten to drown them in ~~#####~~ confusing and overlapping jurisdictions. In addition, the newly created Public Information Secretariat, which replaced the traditional Presidential Press Secretariat, is sorely lacking in competent media professionals to guide its dedicated but media-inexperienced military leaders through the pitfalls

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inherent in handling and dealing with the national and international press. As the human rights issue looms larger on the Argentine scene, media mistakes like Harguindeguy's may cost the military government dearly.

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